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PAGE 01 STATE 287468
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LONDON FOR KINSOLVING; OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR AMBASSADORS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 454 - DECEMBER 1, 1977
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 287468

1. REJECTIONIST SUMMIT. THE TRIPOLI CONFERENCE IS SCHE-
DULED TO BEGIN TODAY. QADHAFT'S PLOY RECEIVED A CONSIDERA-
BLE BOOST LATE YESTERDAY WHEN IRAQ ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD
SEND A DELEGATION HEADED BY A MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY
COMMAND COUNCIL. SYRIA, ALGERIA, PDRY, AND THE PLO
PREVIOUSLY HAD INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD ATTEND.

2. THE IRAQI DECISION APPEARS BASED ON THREE FACTORS:

(A) IF IRAQ FAILED TO ATTEND, THE NASCENT "REJECTIONIST FRONT" MIGHT COLLAPSE, STRENGTHENING SADAT.

(B) BAGHDAD, IN ITS VIEW, MUST BE PRESENT TO THWART SYRIAN ATTEMPTS TO DOMINATE THE REJECTIONISTS.

(C) AN IRAQI PRESENCE WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CONVINCE THE OTHER REJECTIONISTS TO ATTEND A HIGHER LEVEL CONFERENCE (PERHAPS OF ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS) CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR BAGHDAD NEXT MONDAY.

3. RUMORS THAT MODERATE STATES WILL ATTEND THE TRIPOLI CONFERENCE HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING IN ARAB CAPITALS. THE PLO OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN, ABU MAYZAR, WHO RECENTLY MET WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS, STATED THAT THE SAUDIS WOULD SEND A DELEGATION TO TRIPOLI. ARAB PRESS REPORTS SPECULATED THAT THEY MIGHT ATTEND IN ORDER TO MODERATE THE MEETING, BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF SAUDI ATTENDANCE, AND DOUBT THEY WILL GO.

4. THE CONFERENCE IS LIKELY TO HAVE TWO PURPOSES:

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 287468

(A) TO ISSUE A COMMUNIQUE REITERATING THE REJECTION OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE BY THE "ARAB PEOPLE," AND

(B) TO SORT OUT DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ATTENDING STATES ON HOW TO COUNTER SADAT.

THE FIRST ISSUE ON THE AGENDA PROBABLY WILL BE THE VENUE AND TIMING OF THE NEXT MEETING. LIBYA COMPLICATED THE ISSUE YESTERDAY BY CALLING FOR A CONFERENCE OF ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS IN TRIPOLI NEXT WEEK. (CONFIDENTIAL)

5. CAIRO CONFERENCE. IN CAIRO, MEANWHILE, PREPARATIONS FOR SADAT'S CONFERENCE ARE WELL ALONG. EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS APPEAR CONFIDENT AND UPBEAT, ACCORDING TO EMBASY CAIRO. EVEN SO, WE BELIEVE THAT SOME EGYPTIANS MAY HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTED AT THE SOVIET REFUSAL TO ATTEND. THEY PRESUMABLY HOPED THAT SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION WOULD LEAD THOSE WHO HAD TURNED DOWN THE INVITATION TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS. IN ANY CASE, THE EMBASSY REPORTS THAT SOME EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS REGARD SADAT'S TRIP AS BEING VIEWED FAVORABLY BY THE MAJORITY OF SYRIANS; OVER TIME, THESE EGYPTIANS THINK THAT THIS ATTITUDE WILL

FORCE ASSAD TO IGNORE THE BAATH HARDLINERS AND EVENTUALLY COME AROUND TO CONCERTING WITH SADAT.

6. SADAT MAY HAVE PICKED UP SOME ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. PRESS REPORTS FROM BELGRADE STATE THAT ROMANIA WILL SEND A SPECIAL ENVOY TO "OBSERVE" THE CAIRO MEETING.

7. ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, THE PRESS REPORTS SPECULATION REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE MAY DEVELOP INTO CONTACTS AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL OR MAY RUN PARALLEL WITH SECRET MINISTERIAL CONTACTS. MAARIV OBSERVES THAT AFTER TWO OR THREE WEEKS OF INFORMAL TALKS IN CAIRO, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO DECIDE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 287468

WHETHER TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION FROM EXPERTS TO MINISTERS. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE NOTED PRIVATELY THAT BEN-ELISSAR AND ROSENNE IN EFFECT ARE AN ADVANCE TEAM. THE ISRAELIS SEE THE FIRST THREE OR FOUR DAYS AS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSIONS OF THE NATURE OF THE CONFERENCE.

8. ALL ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT THE DELEGATION WILL BE EMPOWERED TO DISCUSS BOTH PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS FROM JERUSALEM. THE JERUSALEM POST STATED YESTERDAY THAT ISRAEL WILL SUGGEST THAT ITS DRAFT TREATY AND THE US-ISRAELI WORKING PAPER BE USED AS STARTING POINTS FOR THE CONFERENCE.

9. ISRAELI PUBLIC REACTION TO THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE REMAINS IN FLUX. ISRAELIS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WELCOMED SADAT'S MOVES AS A SIGN THAT EGYPT GENUINELY SEEKS PEACE. MOREOVER, MOST ISRAELIS ARE PLEASED BY THE WIDE GAP WHICH HAS OPENED UP BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA AND CONSIDER A SEPARATE PEACE WITH EGYPT AS WEAKENING ARAB MILITARY POWER WHILE LEAVING ISRAEL IN POSSESSION OF THE WEST BANK AND THE GOLAN. FURTHERMORE, A SEPARATE ARRANGEMENT WOULD, IN ISRAELI EYES, TEND TO PRECLUDE US PRESSURE FOR CONCESSIONS IN THESE AREAS.

10. DESPITE THESE CONSIDERATIONS, ISRAEL RETAINS A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF AMBIVALENCE TOWARD SADAT'S INITIATIVES. SOME FEAR THAT HE WILL DEMAND TOO MUCH FROM ISRAEL, ESPECIALLY ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE. THE ENSUING COLLAPSE OF NEGOTIATIONS, THESE ISRAELIS FEAR, WOULD PRODUCE A PUBLIC RELATIONS DEBACLE FOR ISRAEL. OTHERS ARE CONCERNED THAT AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DEAL WOULD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 287468

ALIENATE THE US. FURTHERMORE, SOME HARDLINERS WOULD PREFER TO KEEP THE SINAI RATHER THAN AGREE TO A NEAR-TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. FINALLY, ISRAELIS CONTINUE TO BE WORRIED ABOUT SADAT'S HEALTH AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT HIS BEHAVIOR IN THE FUTURE COULD CHANGE DRASTICALLY. (CONFIDENTIAL)

11. LEBANON. SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD RECENTLY TOLD OUR AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS THAT SYRIA REMAINED COMMITTED TO SEEING THE SHTAWRAH AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTED. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATORS HAD REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE "MAPS" CONCERNING THE POSITIONS TO WHICH PALESTINIAN FORCES WOULD WITHDRAW. THE PLO, ASSAD ALSO ASSERTED, HAD LAST WEEK RECONFIRMED ITS COMMITMENT TO THE SHTAWRAH AGREEMENT. DAMASCUS MENA, HOWEVER, CLAIMED YESTERDAY THAT THE PLO HAD INFORMED SYRIA THAT IT OBJECTED TO PULLING OUT OF THE SOUTH GIVEN THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE ARAB ARENA. SIMILARLY, SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS COMMENTED TO EMBASSY BEIRUT THAT THEY BELIEVED THE PLO WOULD RESIST PULLING BACK. (SECRET) VANCE

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